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Fall 9-1-2019

### JRNL 170.01: Elements of News Writing

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# JRNL 170-01 - Elements of News Writing

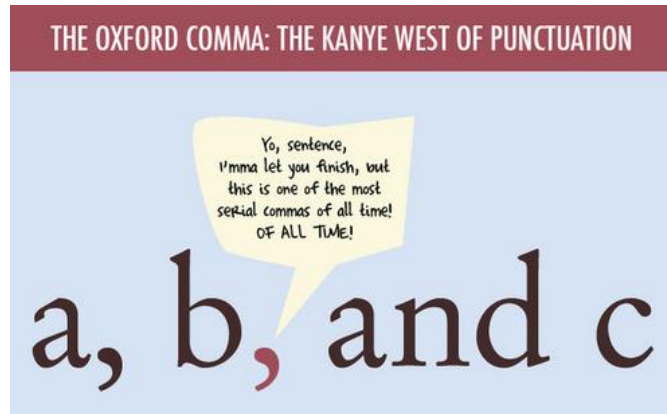
## Fall 2019

- Class Times: MWF 10-10:50
- Location: Don Anderson Hall 004
- Instructor: Associate Professor Jule Banville
- Email: [jule.banville@umontana.edu](mailto:jule.banville@umontana.edu)
- Phone: 243-2237
- Office: DAH 427
- Office Hours: Mondays and Fridays right after this class, until noon

### ABOUT THIS COURSE

What is journalism and why are you going to love it? This course starts there and travels quickly to the fundamentals of doing your dream stories. At its core, this class is about building a strong foundation for skills you have now, skills you'll develop this semester and skills you'll need to master. It's a practical course: the basics of good, journalistic writing. You'll

understand it has a particular style that emphasizes both clarity and an economy of words. And here's something crucial: It's grammatically correct. And that will be a focus, so hang on. We'll travel from commas to quotes, from what makes the news the news to how it's structured into a readable story. We'll learn a few rules from the Associated Press and, by the end, you'll be reporting and writing your own stories and learning to make an audio feature.



**PLEASE NOTE:** Most classes will include hands-on, in-class work. Many will include a quiz. Neither can be made up outside of class unless under extreme circumstances. What this means: THIS IS A CLASS THAT REQUIRES YOU TO SHOW UP. You will not be successful if you skip.

### RECOMMENDED TEXT

#### The AP Stylebook

Edition no older than 2016. Available to purchase online and in most major book stores. Online editions acceptable but not preferred. If you are logged into a university computer, you can access the online version for free from the Mansfield Library's site at [www.apstylebook.com/the-university-of-montana/ap\\_stylebook](http://www.apstylebook.com/the-university-of-montana/ap_stylebook). But just do me a favor and buy the stylebook. We'll all be better for it.

**You will also have handouts and linked reading, listening and viewing assignments.**

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be better writers than you are right now. You will also:

- Understand what a news story is and is not.
- Learn key areas of the AP Stylebook and how to use it as a resource.

- Show proficiency in grammar, usage and punctuation.
- Know how to identify, report and write several types of news stories.
- Effectively interview and quote multiple, relevant sources
- Learn the basics of broadcast writing and audio production.

### **First Half: The Basics**

We'll begin kind-of at the end, by consuming and talking about amazing journalism. As we learn the basics, I want you to know what journalism can be. You'll be regularly quizzed on these "consumption" assignments.

Skills-wise, we'll begin with what makes news, news. Why is an event or a person compelling enough for others to care? What are the types of news stories? How are they the same and different? How are they structured?

You will learn by practicing through *in-class exercises*, some of them graded, and through *assignments completed outside of class*, which are always graded.

We'll also dig deep on grammar and usage in the first half of the course. Classes will focus on punctuation, parts of speech, noun/verb agreement, punctuating quotes, proper use of titles, addresses, abbreviations and other basics of news style as set forth by the AP.

Graded assignments will be based on these basics. In the first half, you'll write stories and parts of stories based on information I give you in class and in handouts. You'll have several take-home assignments. All assignments and deadlines will be posted on Moodle, accessed at [umonline.umt.edu](http://umonline.umt.edu).

**There will be a midterm exam at a date TBA.**

### **Second Half: Putting It All Together**

You will build on the basics to better understand where stories originate, how they're reported and how they should be written. You'll learn how to interview sources and write multiple-source stories. You'll also dip into how news tailored to different media work together to draw an audience. You'll pitch, report and write your own stories. You'll get a quick and fun intro to radio writing and production. We'll also revisit any areas of grammar, usage and style that need work.

Graded assignments will include, but are not limited to:

- Live event coverage: You'll go to and report on an event on campus.
- Speech coverage: You'll attend an on-campus speech and file an on-deadline story.
- Diversity coverage: You'll learn the importance of, how to report on and write a story with sources of color.

**The final exam will cover all aspects of the course.** Test date TBA.

## **USING MOODLE/UM ONLINE**

Your greatest resource for this class will be our page on Moodle, the program used by UM Online, [umonline.umt.edu](http://umonline.umt.edu). If you're enrolled in my class, you're connected to our class page. Every class will be outlined there, although it's not finalized until the morning before the class. All assignments, deadlines and grades are posted there. If you miss a class (just don't!), DO NOT EMAIL ME AND ASK ME WHAT YOU MISSED. Check our class page on

Moodle. MISSING CLASS IS NOT AN EXCUSE FOR MISSING A DEADLINE OR AN ASSIGNMENT, including a reading, listening or viewing assignment, which will be linked there. I will also email you as a class through the Moodle page, which uses your official university email. Make sure you check it. And if you don't, make sure you know how to link all incoming email from your U address to your gmail. If you don't check in on Moodle, FYI, I can tell. It tells me when you last logged in. Creepy, right?

## GRADING

Attendance, Participation, In-Class Work: 25 percent

Assignments: 40 percent

Quizzes: 10 percent

Midterm: 10 percent

Final: 15 percent

Grades are on a scale of 100 percent and use the University of Montana's plus/minus system. The final grade (per requirement) will be given as a letter. **You must receive at least a C-/70 as a final grade for this class to count toward a journalism degree.**

Equivalents to numbered grades are as follows:

- 90 - 100 percent: A
- 80 - 89 percent: B
- 70 - 79 percent: C
- 60 - 69 percent: D
- 50 - 59 percent: F

UM's plus/minus system also makes the following distinctions:

- A+: 97-100
- A: 93-96
- A-: 90-92
- B+: 87-89
- B: 83-86
- B-: 80-82
- C+: 77-79
- C: 73-76
- C-: 70-72
- D+: 67-69
- D: 63-66
- D-: 60-62
- F: 59 or lower

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance: I will take it almost every day. ***The only excused absence is one communicated to AND ACCEPTED BY the instructor via e-mail at least one hour prior to class.*** Unexcused absences will factor into the final grade. If you have more than three unexcused absences, you will fail the Attendance/Participation/In-Class portion of your final grade, which counts for 25 percent.
- Missed in-class quizzes and work cannot be made up.
- Participation: Expect to be called on. Expect to be called out if you're not paying attention or distracted by screens.

- **Deadlines:** They're not negotiable. At least 10 points will be dropped from the final grade of an assignment for each day it's late, including the day of deadline if an assignment is filed after the posted time. Example: If an assignment is due via email to me by 9 a.m. and arrives in my inbox at 9:15, that's a 10-point deduction.
- **Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code:** All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the university. All students need to be familiar with conduct codes at the University of Montana, which can be accessed via this link: <http://www.umt.edu/safety/policies/>
- **DOUBLE-DIPPING:** No element of an assignment for another class can fulfill assignments for this class without DOCUMENTED ACCEPTANCE from instructors of all involved courses. Failure to do so will result in failure of that assignment.
- **PLAGIARIASM and ETHICS:** Banish the idea of turning in something written by someone else and presented as your own. Penalties range from failing this class to expulsion from school.

### **Disability-Related Modifications**

Students who experience disability-related barriers should contact [Disability Services](http://www.umt.edu/dss) (<http://www.umt.edu/dss>). If students elect to use approved academic adjustments, they must provide in advance formal notification from Disability Services to the instructor.

### **After-hours Access to Building**

If you are enrolled as a journalism major or minor, your Griz card should get you into the building at the main entrance. If you are undeclared or have not officially included journalism as a major/minor, you'll need to fill out the form linked below asap. It's case-sensitive if you're typing it. [tiny.cc/AHAF18](http://tiny.cc/AHAF18)

### **Class Structure/Sample**

Because my classes change according to your needs and abilities, I don't map a class-by-class rundown for the entire semester in this syllabus. But here is a sample for the first week to give you an idea of how class time and outside work are structured.

#### **Monday 9/26**

Introductions

Syllabus overview

Intro consumption assignments by listening/discussing short audio story.

Listening Assignment: "Losing Ground" from the podcast Reveal.

#### **Wednesday 9/28**

Quiz on "Losing Ground"

Discussion about "Losing Ground"

Continued explanation of the course and grading

Introduction: The News Lead/Lede

#### **Friday 9/30**

What makes the news the news?

Intro to the big three: Timely, Important, Interesting

In-class work: Take a cut-up news story and put it back together.

Reading/Viewing assignment: National Geographic's "The Story of a Face"